

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1182
INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 16537

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDIP, JA, CB
SUBJECT: IMPRESSIONS OF KAMPUCHEA: VISIT OF AMBASSADOR
SATO AND DELEGATION

1. SUMMARY: DURING VISIT TO KAMPUCHEA SEPTEMBER 2-9 TO
PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS TO POL POT REGIME, JAPANESE
AMBASSADOR TO PEKING SATO HAD SEVERAL HOURS OF CONVERSATION
WITH LEADERSHIP, AND HIS DELEGATION, INCLUDING OFFICIALS OF
PEKING EMBASSY AND MOFA, WAS TREATED CORDIALLY BY
KAMPUCHEAN HOSTS. VISITORS WERE STRUCK BY BIZARRE ASPECTS
OF KAMPUCHEA, E.G., SCARCITY OF PEOPLE IN PHNOM PENH, BUT
ALSO REGISTERED SOME POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS. JAPANESE
THOUGHT POL POT GOVERNMENT WAS RATHER CONFIDENTLY IN
CONTROL OF INTERNAL SITUATION, AND SAW NO OBVIOUS SIGNS OF
REPRESSIVE ACTIVITY. FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT OF WHAT SATO AND
HIS COLLEAGUES DID AND SAW DURING THEIR WEEK IN KAMPUCHEA,
AS PROVIDED BY MOFA FIRST SEA DIVDIR YUSHITA. WE WILL BE
TALKING FURTHER WITH MOFA CONCERNING SUBSTANCE OF SATO
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CONVERSATIONS WITH KHIEU SAMPHAN, POL POT AND IENG SARY.
END SUMMARY.

2. ITINERARY:
SATO DELEGATION (INCLUDING DONOWAKI AND MURAYAMA FROM
PEKING, ASIA BUREAU DEPDIRGEN MIYAKE AND YUSHITA FROM MOFA)
ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH LATE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 2, ON

FLIGHT OTHERWISE OCCUPIED BY WHAT APPEARED TO BE CHINESE ADVISERS OR OFFICIALS. GROUP WAS QUARTERED IN LARGE VILLA NOW SERVING AS GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE, WITH MEALS BROUGHT TO VILLA FROM OUTSIDE. SATO MET WITH IENG SARY THAT AFTERNOON. EVENING ENTERTAINMENT CONSISTED OF FILMS AT THE VILLA, INCLUDING ONE ON VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION, WHICH WAS SHOWN IN TOKYO DURING IENG SARY VISIT.

3. SINCE DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA RESTS ONLY ON 10TH, 20TH AND 30TH OF EACH MONTH, SEPTEMBER 3 (SUNDAY) WAS FILLED WITH ACTIVITY. DELEGATION VISITED TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL ON OUTSKIRTS OF PHNOM PENH IN MORNING, FOLLOWED BY MID-DAY BOAT TRIP ON TONLE SAP AND MEKONG. IN AFTERNOON, SATO PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO KHIEU SAMPHAN AND MET WITH HIM FOR ONE HOUR. THERE WAS SECOND MEETING LATER THAT DAY WITH IENG SARY, AFTER WHICH SARY HOSTED DINNER FOR DELEGATION AT "CITY HOTEL," (EX-HOTEL ROYALE).

4. ON MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 4, DELEGATION LEFT PHNOM PENH BY TRAIN FOR VISIT TO ANGKOR. VIP VISITORS CUSTOMARILY MADE THAT TRIP BY AUTO, JAPANESE WERE INFORMED, BUT MEKONG FLOODING RENDERED ROAD IMPASSABLE. TRAIN WAS RELATIVELY NEW AND WELL MAINTAINED FOUR-CAR AFFAIR POWERED BY FRENCH DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE. IT COVERED APPROXIMATELY 400 KILOMETERS TO SISOPHON IN SIX HOURS. DRIVE FROM SISOPHON TO SIEM REAP TOOK THREE HOURS OVER ROADS QUITE RUDIMENTARY IN
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PLACES. NEXT TWO DAYS WERE SPENT IN AND AROUND ANGKOR AND ENROUTE BACK TO PHNOM PENH, INCLUDING SIDE TRIPS TO IRRIGATION PROJECTS NEAR SISOPHON.

5. ON SEPTEMBER 7, SATO CALLED ON POL POT AT PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE. FOLLOWING ONE HOUR MEETING, DELEGATION WAS SHOWN SOME SIGHTS OF PHNOM PENH, INCLUDING FORMER JAPANESE EMBASSY BUILDING (WHICH LOOKED TO BE IN REASONABLE SHAPE), ROYAL PALACE, AND HEADQUARTERS OF FORMER GKR ARMED FORCES. FEATURE OF LATTER WAS DISPLAY OF WEAPONS CAPTURED FROM VIETNAMESE, MOSTLY SOVIET-MADE BUT INCLUDING ONE AMERICAN APC. IN EVENING SATO HOSTED RETURN BANQUET FOR IENG SARY, TO WHICH RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC CORPS, MINUS NORTH KOREAN, WAS ALSO INVITED.

6. SEPTEMBER 8 DELEGATION VISITED IRRIGATION PROJECTS IN VICINITY OF PHNOM PENH, AND SATO WAS GUEST OF PRC CHARGE' FOR LUNCH. IN AFTERNOON HE CALLED ON EGYPTIAN AND LAOTIAN AMBASSADORS, ONLY TWO RESIDENT AMBASSADORS IN KAMPUCHEA. AFTER BRIEF VISIT TO PHNOM PENH'S FRIENDSHIP STORE ON SATURDAY MORNING, GROUP DEPARTED FOR PEKING, ACCOMPANIED BY LOAD OF RETURNING PRC OFFICIALS.

7. IMPRESSIONS:

PHNOM PENH - JAPANESE WERE TOLD POPULATION OF CAPITAL WAS IN VICINITY OF 200,000 (AS IENG SARY HAD ASSERTED WHEN HERE). MAJORITY WERE SAID TO BE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND FACTORY WORKERS, PLUS SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN CITY. DELEGATION WAS UNABLE TO MAKE INFORMED ESTIMATE OF ITS OWN. MEMBERS DID SEE SMALL FACTORIES IN OPERATION IN SUBURBS; GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES WERE MANNED; SOME SOCIAL SERVICES (E.G., HOSPITAL) WERE OBSERVED; AND THERE WERE INDEED NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASSIGNED STREET-SWEEPING

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AND OTHER MAINTENANCE CHORES. CITY LOOKED RELATIVELY CLEAN AND WELL KEPT. NONETHELESS, ONE ONLY SAW PEOPLE "HERE AND THERE," STREETS WERE LINED WITH EMPTY SHOPS AND HOMES, AND TOTAL EFFECT WAS BIZARRE AND DISCONCERTING. RESIDENT DIPLOMATS TOLD JAPANESE POPULATION HAD INCREASED MARKEDLY IN PAST YEAR, HOWEVER, AND SAID AUTHORITIES HAD TOLD THEM GOAL WAS CITY OF 400,000.

8. COUNTRYSIDE:

JAPANESE WERE IMPRESSED BY BROAD EXPANSE OF APPARENTLY FERTILE FARMLAND ALONG ROUTE OF RAILROAD BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND SISOPHON. RICE CROPS APPEARED IN GOOD SHAPE, AND IRRIGATION CANALS SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN WELL-MAINTAINED. DELEGATION'S IMPRESSIONS OF PEASANT LIFE WERE OF COURSE

FLEETING AND SUPERFICIAL. JAPANESE SAW LARGE GROUPS OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS AT SEVERAL POINTS IN TRAIN JOURNEY, APPARENTLY ENGAGED IN IRRIGATION MAINTENANCE OR PLANTING, AND WERE TOLD THAT SUCH GROUPS REPRESENTED BASIC WORK UNIT OF APPROXIMATELY 100, INTO WHICH LARGE (5,000-8,000 PERSON) CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNES WERE DIVIDED. TO PASSING JAPANESE, WORKERS APPEARED TO BE AT HOME WITH THEIR TASKS -- IF THEY WERE TRANSPLANTED CITY FOLK THEY HAD BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO RURAL LIFE. JAPANESE DID NOT SEE ARMED SOLDIERS OR MILITIA IN VICINITY OF GROUPS OF WORKERS, AND NOTICED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL FARM HOMES, AND FAMILY FARMING UNITS, INDICATING THAT NOT ALL PEASANTS HAD BEEN FORCED INTO COMMUNES.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS:

ON BASIS OF WHAT THEY SAW, AND ALLOWING FOR POTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES THEIR GUIDED TOUR AFFORDED, JAPANESE TENTATIVELY CONCLUDED THAT PERHAPS WORST REPRESSION WAS PAST. YUSHITA CITED ABSENCE OF ARMED GUARDS WATCHING OVER GROUPS OF WORKERS, AND SAID DELEGATION DID NOT SENSE OPPRESSIVE ATMOSPHERE. WHILE KAMPUCHEANS WERE SAID TO WORK HARDER NOW THAN IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY DAYS, JAPANESE DID NOT PERCEIVE ATTITUDES OF DESPERATION AMONG PEOPLE; INSTEAD, WORKERS LOOKED, IN A SENSE, "AT EASE" ACCORDING TO YUSHITA. HE SAID HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WAS NOT MAJOR PART OF DELEGATION'S DISCUSSIONS WITH KAMPUCHEAN OFFICIALS. (WE WILL PURSUE THIS ASPECT FURTHER.)

10. MISSING PERSONS:

DELEGATION MADE REPRESENTATIONS CONCERNING MISSING JAPANESE JOURNALISTS AND JAPANESE WIVES OF CAMBODIANS, BUT APPARENTLY DID NOT RAISE QUESTION OF U.S. MIA'S. YUSHITA NOTED IENG SARY SAID TWO YEARS AGO THAT NO FOREIGNERS WERE UNDER KAMPUCHEAN CONTROL, AND SAID THAT AFTER SEEING SOMETHING OF COUNTRY, DELEGATION COULD NOT SERIOUSLY CONTEST THAT ASSERTION. HE NOTED CONTINUING VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEM, AND REAL POSSIBILITY THAT PHNOM PENH AUTHORITIES WOULD HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER FOREIGNER WAS IN FACT WITHIN KAMPUCHEAN BOUNDARIES. JAPANESE WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUE TO REMIND KAMPUCHEANS OF THEIR INTEREST IN THIS MATTER, BUT EXPECT NO DRAMATIC PROGRESS.

11. PRINCE SIHANOUK:

AS DELEGATION WAS BEING SHOWN EXTERIOR OF ROYAL PALACE,
ESCORT NOTED THAT PRINCE SIHANOUK WAS OFTEN IN RESIDENCE.
HOWEVER, ESCORT ADDED THAT PRINCE OFTEN WENT INTO COUNTRY.
JAPANESE WERE TOLD BY MEMBER OF RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC CORPS
THAT NEITHER HE NOR ANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES HAD EVER SEEN
PRINCE. MANSFIELD

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